

What is Claimed:

1. A method of applying a colorant to a contact lens mold, comprising:

maintaining an overpressure of inert gas in an inert atmosphere chamber that comprises at least one contact lens mold and at least one isolation shutter;

opening said isolation shutter;

introducing a printing comprising colorant into said chamber;

applying said colorant to said contact lens mold;

removing said printing device from said chamber; and

closing said isolation shutter.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber comprises less than about 0.5 weight percent oxygen prior to opening said isolation shutter.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber comprises less than about 3 weight percent oxygen while said isolation shutter is opened.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber comprises less than about 0.5 weight percent oxygen, said percent oxygen being measured at about 2 seconds after closing said isolation shutter.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said isolation shutter slidably opens and closes.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein said isolation shutter remains open for less than about 2 seconds.
7. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inert gas comprises nitrogen.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said overpressure of inert gas gives rise to an inert gas velocity of at least about 0.5 meters per second measured using an anemometer positioned adjacent to an opening in the inert atmosphere chamber, said opening being provided by maintaining said isolation shutter in the opened position.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is applied by pad stamping said colorant to said contact lens mold.

10. A contact lens mold printing system, comprising:

an inert atmosphere chamber being capable of conveying a contact lens mold therethrough, said inert atmosphere chamber capable of maintaining an inert atmosphere environment;

an isolation shutter on said inert atmosphere chamber being capable of opening and closing; and

a printing mechanism being located external to said inert atmosphere chamber, said printing mechanism being capable of applying a colorant to the contact lens mold in the chamber when said isolation shutter is opened.

11. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said inert atmosphere environment comprises less than about 0.5 weight percent oxygen.

12. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber further comprises an inert gas inlet.

13. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 12, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber further comprise an inert gas outlet.

14. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said inert atmosphere chamber comprises at least two isolation shutters.

15. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said isolation shutter is capable of slidably opening and closing.

16. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 15, further comprising a gasket capable of being in sealable contact with said inert atmosphere chamber and said isolation shutter.

17. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said printing mechanism further comprises a stamping pad.

18. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 14, further comprising two or more printing mechanisms.

19. The contact lens mold printing system of claim 10, wherein said printing mechanism is located in air.

20. An isolation shutter capable of minimizing the exposure of oxygen to contact lens molds in an inert environment and capable of drying printer pads, said isolation shutter comprising a plate slidably situated adjacent to said inert environment, said plate comprising at least one edge and a surface, said at least one edge comprising at least one gas inlet port, said surface comprising at least one gas outlet port, wherein said plate comprises at least one channel in fluidic communication between said gas inlet port and said gas outlet port.

21. A method of applying a colorant to a contact lens mold, comprising:

maintaining an overpressure of inert gas in an inert atmosphere chamber comprising at least one contact lens mold;

introducing a printing device comprising colorant into said chamber;

applying said colorant to said contact lens mold; and

removing said printing device from said chamber.